

The order irrelevance principle

The order of the objects in a group or a set is immaterial in the counting process.

If there are 10 pencils of different colours and if the task is just to count the total number of pencils, then whether one starts with blue pencil or red pencil is irrelevant.

Once a child is thorough with the concepts of the previous four principles then it is easier to understand this concept. The child should also get the understanding that each counted item is still a single unit all by itself and it cannot be tagged or named as number one or number two. The number names or tags are given temporarily to various objects just for the purpose of counting. The number name does not stick to the objects after the counting process is over. Considering the same example the 10th black pencil, cannot be called the 10th pencil after the counting is over,

Teaching activities to teach order irrelevance principle:

- A number of practice sessions by giving random objects and the students are asked to count the set of objects. It should be made of miscellaneous objects put together without any commonality.
- Giving them a set of pictures or photographs and the children should be asked to count or track a particular object from the pictures. For example, if the child is shown 4 different pictures of garden with plants and some children playing there, the students should be asked to count the number of children in all the 4 pictures. Then they can be asked to count the plants in all the pictures and so on.

In whatever order one counts there are only 4 stars totally.

